



CECILIE M. LOIDOLT

- PARTNER, BASSFOR REMELE
- PERSONAL INJURY DEFENSE:
MEDICAL MALPRACTICE
- MINNESOTA SUPER LAWYERS:
2003–2013; TOP 50 WOMEN:
2011–2013; TOP 100 WOMEN:
2005–2009; TOP 100: 2012

The Gunslinger, the Bulldog or the Pit Bull

CALL HER WHAT YOU WANT—CECILIE LOIDOLT JUST WINS

BY ANNA BEFORT
PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICH FLEISCHMAN

WHEN CECILIE LOIDOLT HAD HER SECOND interview with Meagher & Geer, she flat-out told them she would only do litigation. "I said, 'I can't do insurance coverage, I can't write contracts for you, I can't do taxes,'" she says. "If I have to do any one of those things, I will go back to being a bank examiner or a cocktail waitress."

Luckily for her clients, she didn't have to pick up her serving platter again. Twenty years later, Loidolt is one of the top trial lawyers in the state and still practices in downtown Minneapolis, where she devotes all her time to medical malpractice defense. "It's perfect for me because it's one of the few areas of practice where you actually get to try cases, which is what I dreamed of when I was 12," she says.

Loidolt has successfully defended many doctors and a few nurses over the years. The 51-year-old attorney is riding a string of 21 consecutive wins at trial. In 2012, she was named an Attorney of the Year by *Minnesota Lawyer*.

Loidolt's clients call her "pit bull," "bulldog," and her personal favorite, "gunslinger." She enjoys the nicknames. "I really like fighting for people," she says. "If you feel like you've been wrongfully accused and the person who's fighting for you is timid or meek or Minnesota nice, that's not going to work. You want that person to get in there and fight."

When it comes to trial strategy, Loidolt's philosophy is simple. "The number one most important thing I do is prepare. ... I read every page, every piece of paper in a file, every email, every page of medical records," she says. "I go to everything with notes. That's my thing. I'm prepared." That regimen extends to her clients as well. "I beat people up when I prepare

them for their testimony. It hasn't come back to kick me yet, but I have been hard on people in deposition preparation and trial preparation because I need them to be ready for when it happens by the plaintiff's lawyer."

That preparation was particularly crucial in 2012, when Loidolt took on several high-profile cases involving hot social issues. One involved the quality of prison medical care, in the case of a Stillwater prisoner whose spinal tumor was missed by multiple doctors. Loidolt represented one of two radiologists involved in the case and ended up proving the primary care doctor's negligence while also proving her own client was not negligent.

The second noteworthy case involved the death of a 7-month-old baby who contracted meningitis after his mother declined to have him vaccinated during the baby's regular checkups. When the mother brought the infant into the hospital with a cold and fever, the emergency room physician recommended antibiotics at the very least, which the mother also refused. "She left without antibiotics, and the baby was dead the next morning," says Loidolt. "It's one of the saddest cases because the child didn't have to die, and if he'd been immunized, he would not have died."

Loidolt defended the ER physician after the mother sued. Early on, the plaintiff's lawyer asked the court to preclude the defense from arguing the comparative negligence of the mother, and the judge agreed. However, that decision didn't sit right with Loidolt, so she filed one of the only motions to reconsider of her career. "Many of my colleagues would not have asked for that because they believe that

the jury will then 'split the baby,' if you will, and come up with a compromise verdict. I believe that if they buy your case, they buy your whole case," says Loidolt. "If they buy my whole case, then they'll believe that my client is not negligent and the mother is negligent."

That's exactly what the jury found, after the judge granted the motion to reconsider. "That's an example of how we as lawyers really need to listen to our clients," she says. "Everybody in that case at the hospital, my doctor client and the nurses, said, 'What about the mother's part in this? What's her responsibility in this?' And that's why I felt like we needed to have the mother's fault on the verdict form, because the jury needed to hear the truth."

The doggedness that's so evident in the courtroom carries into Loidolt's personal life. It helped propel her to a sub-four-hour Boston Marathon in 2006 (though she's since traded marathons for triathlons). And it helped her juggle the rigors of trial law and single parenting during her husband's multiple deployments to Iraq. "I tried many cases when my husband was gone," Loidolt says, "and our mantra is, 'We will make it work.'"

She has. And yet, Loidolt insists that at the end of the day, she's still a cocktail waitress in disguise. "I have often said, 'I'm a cocktail waitress in sheep's clothing,' because that part of me never left. I have worked very hard. I do not think I am particularly gifted, but I work hard," she says. "The real me is sitting at counsel table at the end of a long day in trial, with barely any makeup left on—where does it go?—sitting next to the person I'm fighting for. It is not glamorous, what we do. It is very hard work." 



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